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ABSTRACT

This handbook provides basic information about adult learning as it relates to acquiring another language. It is intended to serve as an introduction to more comprehensive study for instructors and tutors. The guide provides some information on the following subjects: (1) an outline of reasons for adapting existing textbook material and indications of ways to adapt dialogs and other language activities; (2) a discussion of the principles of adult learning and characteristics of adults that affect the learning process; (3) a brief presentation of the elements of language, that is, meaning, grammar, sound system and social usage, and principles of language learning; and (4) the role of the instructor and some instructional techniques. The final section also includes several lesson plans dealing with listening comprehension, oral practice, the sounds and music of the language, vocabulary, pattern practice, visual aids, reading, spelling, and writing. A summary, review questions, and a selected bibliography complete the volume. (AMH)

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AN INTRODUCTION TO TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE TO ADULTS

By Mary Selman

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SUMMARY AND REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to provide basic information about the business of adult learning as it relates to acquiring another language.

Most of the resource material and literature in the field of English as a second language is designed for professional instructors who have a comprehensive background in education, in linguistics and in teaching English as a second language. This handbook is designed for the instructor or tutor who may lack such academic preparation and yet is teaching and wants some guidance. It provides background to the matter of teaching English, teaching techniques and information about those things which increase our effectiveness as instructors of adults. It may also be useful for those educators who have not been trained in adult education.

Two other publications which are useful for the paraprofessional are a special issue of TESL Talk, *Teaching English as a Second Language: A Methodology*, and Earl Stevick's *Helping People Learn English*. Although much of the material found in these books is useful to the untrained or inexperienced, the need remains for a more specific handbook for those who teach adults. An adult education approach is student centred. It is one in which the specific language needs and aspirations of the learners form the basis of the course as opposed to one in which the main goal is general mastery of the grammar and vocabulary of the language. The language need of the learners may be for survival English or they may be needs related to their job, vocational training or academic education. A student centred approach lends itself to looking at what students need language for, e.g. dealing with medical problems, coping with the language demands of vocational courses. Looking at such specific language needs makes it easier to identify how we use language, i.e. what functions it serves, such as asking for information, making a complaint, making an apology. A structural or grammar-oriented one as in the books mentioned above concentrates on the subject, i.e. the language as such. Thinking in terms of functions, such as polite requests or expressing intention, encourages the use of real language and concentrates on meaning rather than emphasizing grammar. Grammar guides are essential, but are best kept as a resource to the student and instructor rather than as the main focus of the lesson.

The material in this handbook outlines the issues briefly. It can serve as an introduction to more comprehensive study for instructors and tutors.

The summary at the end of the last section includes questions which can function as a review and check up for the reader. You may want to preview those questions before launching into section one.

References are given at the end of each section in the realization that the reader will no doubt wish to explore particular topics in more detail. Complete general references with bibliographical information are, of course, provided at the end.

The principles, practices and suggestions that follow were tried out and developed with colleagues, student teachers and volunteer teacher aides in activities consisting of formal training programs, workshops and in-service development programs and individual conferences.

I would like to express my appreciation to all those colleagues who have contributed to my experience and knowledge in this field. ESL students have also added much to this handbook by their willingness to cooperate in trying new approaches and in giving their reaction to them.

The instructor should have a detailed course guide along with integrated visual aids, tapes and student work books. These materials should be designed for adults and focus on their real life concerns. The material that best meets these criteria at present is *English as a Second Language: A New Approach to the 21st Century*, (available from Modulearn, P.O. Box 635, 33157 Camino Capistrano Unit A, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675). However this material should not be followed slavishly. It requires:

1. adaption to students' concerns and interests
2. adaptation to the Canadian scene and to local areas
3. provision for transfer from controlled activities to spontaneous use in the classroom and in the community
4. provision for an extension to a functional approach
5. more varied learning activities

The importance of adapting teaching materials should not be underestimated. Adaptations can be made by first asking the following questions:

1. Who are the students? What are their needs? e.g. a trapper in the North needs to have language for dealing with fur buyers; the inmate in a prison may need language for talking with the parole board, peers, guards and instructors; the learner who wants to acquire sufficient English to gain entry into training for nursing will need help in language skills required in that course, e.g. reading college level texts, following oral directions, taking notes; the learner who wants to obtain his Canadian citizenship needs to learn how to communicate his knowledge of Canada and his suitability for becoming a citizen.
2. What community does the ESL program serve? Is it rural or urban? What is the life experience of those who live there? What specific things does the student need English for to be effective in that community? What does the community expect of him?
3. Are dialogues and narratives composed of natural language or are they stilted by unnatural use of particular grammatical structures? The following dialogue between tenant and apartment manager, taken from the Modulearn materials clearly needs adaptation.

(a) Mrs. Kim: When are you going to fix our shower?
(b) Manager: I'm going to fix it to-morrow.
(c) Mrs. Kim: When are you going to fix the roof?
(d) Manager: To-morrow. I'm going to fix it to-morrow.
(e) Mrs. Kim: But tomorrow never comes.

The problems here are multiple.

1. no natural opener to the conversations such as "say", "by the way" or "excuse me"
2. no indication at the outset that this is not a first conversation on the subject, although line (e) makes you wonder
3. no natural flow, e.g. line (c) does not respond to line (b) or even directly relate to line (a)
4. the grammatical structure "going to" occurs in every line but (e). This is a gross distortion of natural speech, a result of a grammar oriented approach.
5. line (e) is pretty inflammatory if this is in fact a first conversation on the subject. Language learners do need to learn the language of insistence or standing up for their rights, and even sarcasm, but it needs to be appropriate. The language whould be typical of native speakers. It can be simplified for those who have very little English yet still be natural.

Assuming it is a first conversation on the subject, this dialogue could be rewritten as follows.

Mgr.: Hi
Mrs. K.: Hi, say Mr. Jones, my shower is leaking.
Mgr.: Is it leaking much?
Mrs. K.: Yes, and it's the hot water.
Mgr.: I'm going to do some repairs this afternoon. I'll come up and take a look.
Mrs. K.: Thanks.

and for a more advanced group of learners . . . .

Mgr.: Hi
Mrs. K.: Hi. Say Mr. Jones, we're having a problem with our shower. The hot water tap has been leaking for the last couple of days.
Mgr.: I'm going to be pretty busy for the next few days. It'll be next week before I can get to it.
Mrs. K.: How about sending a plumber then? It's an awful waste of hot water.
Mgr.: The owner won't pay for jobs like that. You'll just have to shut off all the hot water in your apartment when you're not using it.

The structure "going to" which is being practised in this lesson is a natural part of this dialogue. Drill with a particular structure should occur in other activities which are mentioned in the section on instructional techniques. The dialogue is a piece of natural language and should not be distorted to provide intensive practice with a structure.

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Section One
ADULT LEARNING AND THE ADULT LEARNER

Before we get into the matter of language learning and techniques for bringing it about, it is important to consider some principles involved in adult learning and some characteristics of the adult learner. There are certain basic principles that characterize all adult learning. Understanding them will help the instructor to plan classroom activities that provide the best opportunity for learning to occur.

Principles of Adult Learning

1. *Content should be needed:* It is essential to find out what ESL students most need language for in the immediate future, whether it be to find the right bus to get home from class, to cope with the language of his math instructor, his boss's directions or a simple friendly exchange. One way of doing this is to have groups of students (three is enough for this) draw a map of their itinerary the day before. At each stop they should identify the people they spoke English with. Precise cartography is less important than the nature of the interaction at each place. The instructor will learn a lot about the student's language needs as well as have a chance to note problems such as those of structure and pronunciation. These problems can be the basis of future lessons. The map in figure 1 is the sort of diagram you would expect the students to draw. Showing them a map of your previous day's activities will help them understand your expectations.

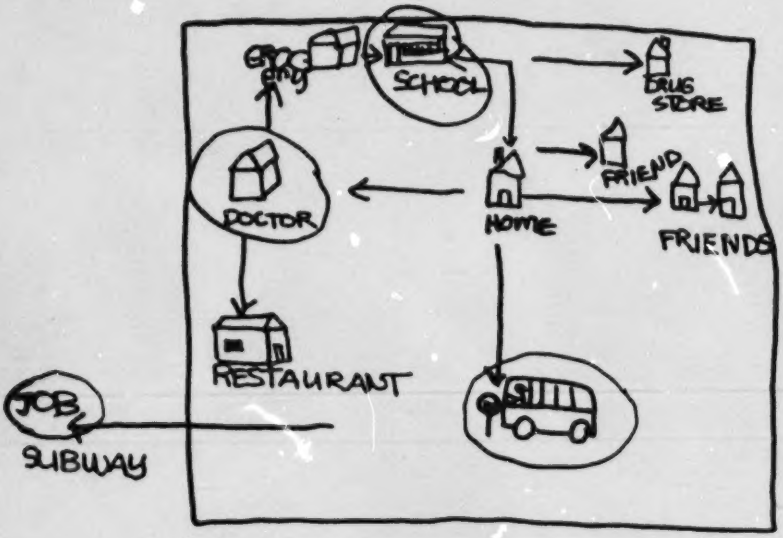


Figure 1
(reprinted from Themes and Tools by permission of the Ministry of Culture and Recreation, Citizenship Branch, Ontario)

2. *Material should be meaningful.* In terms of the learner it should relate to his experience. In thinking of what the teacher presents to the learner, it should begin with simple, concrete items and gradually move to more complex, abstract ones. Visual aids such as calendars, pictures (particularly large photographs of real life situations), diagrams, maps and charts are invaluable as aids to putting across meaning.

3. *Practice* is essential to real learning. It involves applying items learned. It should not be confused with mere repetition that is devoid of meaning. Practice is most effective when it is guided and when the purpose is clear. It should be conducted in short periods interspersed with short rests or a change of activity. The less capable the learner, (and this usually applies to those who have had little education), the more important it is to distribute the practice. Group practice is useful in establishing a pattern or skill and can be followed by individual practice at a pace that is comfortable for the learner. Practice that involves more than one sense enhances learning, e.g. after practising a sentence, a student might order the sentence in the written form by sorting scrambled flash cards.

today	fix	you	can	our	?	shower

of course becomes "Can you fix our shower today?" Such an activity is of course limited to those learners who have the rudiments of reading.

4. *Reinforcement by means of reward is effective* in helping adults learn. Rewards given by the instructor should not be excessive. A simple gesture or encouraging word which indicates that a response is correct is probably more effective than glowing praise which is difficult to repeat and is sometimes taken to be patronizing. Incorporating student ideas in the lesson can also function as a reward. Accepting him where he is, and enjoying him as a person is more effective than overenthusiastic praise.

Incorporating student ideas into the lesson can function as a reward, reinforcement or motivator.

5. *Knowledge of results or feedback serves to reinforce learning.* The student likes to know how he is doing. Short informal quizzes consisting of only two or three items can give vital information on progress to the student without creating anxiety that often accompanies formal testing. There should be as little gap as possible between performance of the task and feedback on it. A short spelling exercise of five words, marked on the spot produces more learning than one of twenty returned to the student the next week.

6. *The ability to remember is improved if an item is needed during the time it is stored in the short term memory.* Items taught should therefore be reviewed in various ways to prompt storage in the long term memory. Furthermore, items that relate to something already known by the student will be more readily learned. Those things that are used and applied in real life, or in simulations of it, are remembered, e.g. on field trips, in role playing. The instructor needs to be clear on goals that involve memory. Is the student being asked only to recognize certain items or to recall them? If activities are directed toward recognition, the learner should not be expected to produce the item. For example if he has only learned the meaning of a word in a reading context, he should not be expected to use that word in an original sentence or necessarily spell it correctly without further study and practice.

7. *Classroom climate affects learning.* The learning environment is both emotional and physical. Because the student is being encouraged to learn, which is to change his behaviour, it is particularly important that the learning situation is a comfortable, supportive one in which he does not feel threatened by exposure of what he may regard as his shortcomings. Emotional climate can also be affected by the size, temperature, lighting and seating arrangements in the classroom. Where maximum interaction is desired it is important that the students are seated in such a way that everyone can see and hear everyone else. Breaking a large group into smaller ones and into pairs for certain activities can create a more friendly environment that fosters mutual support. It is important that facilities such as seating are suitable for adults. Child size desks can be both uncomfortable and psychologically damaging.

Facilities such as seating should be suitable for adults.

8. *Motivation is essential in a learning situation.* People are pulled in two directions. They want to grow and develop themselves but at the same time they resist change, which all learning involves. The instructor's job is to encourage the growth side and at the same time make change rewarding. One thing that helps is to choose materials and activities that are appropriate to the learner. If you ask a person to behave in some way or to use materials that are inappropriate to his age or sex, he is likely to reject or distort the learning you intend.

Another aid to motivation is to put the student in a situation in which he sees others using the skill or where the increased skill or knowledge would make the experience more enjoyable for him. Having visitors to class and going on field trips that require interaction help in this regard.

Identifying with his problems and devising activities that develop skills to deal with those concerns foster motivation. For example if he has a problem with his landlord, decide what language he needs to deal with it. Is it a matter of:

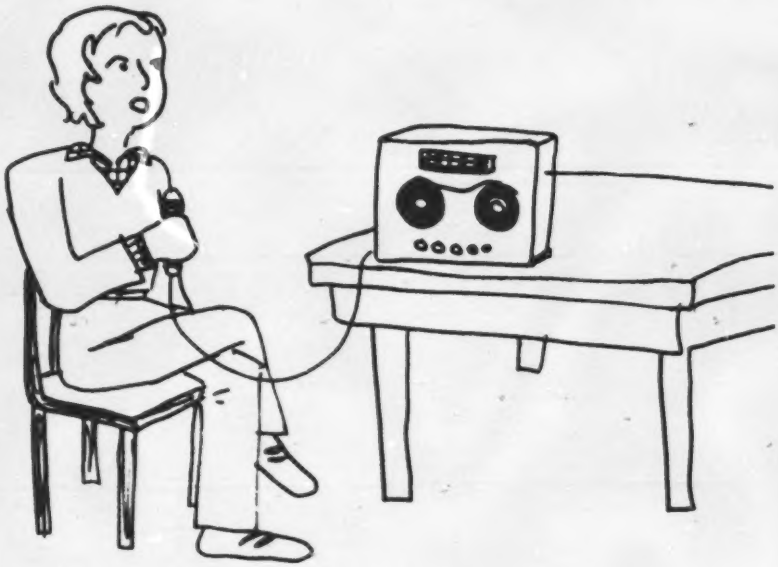
explaining the problem?
being assertive about it?
reporting it to the rentalsman?

Many students who come to adult classes come, in part for social reasons. Such motivation should be regarded as healthy, and a tool for enhancing the learning situation. Those who want to socialize will want to participate in activities that require interaction.

Choose materials appropriate for the learner.

9. *Learning outside the classroom in the situation where the skills or knowledge wanted are naturally used, can be very effective.* Experience *is* the best teacher, provided that the experience is given some organization. The benefits of planned field trips and projects in the community will be discussed later. Helping the student discover that he can learn from people in his environment and not just from his teacher is giving him a tool for learning. It is important that the student be encouraged to be independent of the instructor and be in control of his own learning as much as possible.

10. *Objectives for a lesson should state a change in student behaviour.* By regarding the learning goals in this way we bring precision to our work. Your success in helping the student to learn can be measured by asking him to behave according to that objective. For example, if your objective is for him to be able to carry on a conversation with a landlord about a problem you would first assess his ability to do so. If he cannot do it, introduce new vocabulary and structures, and provide guided practise with them. It may take several lessons to get him to the stage where he can deal with the language in a spontaneous way. Eventually you would create a situation in a game, role play, problem solving situation or real life experience in



'Before and after' assessment applies to adult education too.

which he participates in a landlord tenant conversation. To evaluate his achievement of the objective compare his new level of ability with the competence he demonstrated at the beginning of the sequence. Objectives in the Modulearn material, referred to in the introduction, are put in terms of what the student will be able to do at the end of the lesson e.g. in lesson 33 the student will describe a bathroom in bad condition. Given this clear objective you can easily assess whether the learner has achieved it. If he cannot describe a bathroom in poor condition, you need to take another run at that lesson, and give the student more opportunity to practise.

11. *Adults generally want to be able to apply what they have learned as soon as possible.* They voluntarily come to adult classes for a purpose. If they do not see that they are achieving that purpose e.g. being able to communicate more effectively with English speaking people in their environment, they may well lose interest. Taking the objective above, have students report a problem to their own landlord in real life and report the conversation to the class.

12. *Each person has his own style of learning.* Some learn best visually, some through physical participation, some through listening. Learn as much as you can about your students and how they learn best.

You can accommodate those styles or at least provide a variety of learning activities that provide for them. A good way of handling these differences is to have several kinds of activities available and let the learner choose the one he prefers.

Each person has his own style of learning, have several kinds of learning activities available.

The Adult Learner

Adults do not lose the power to learn, but as age advances the speed of learning may be reduced. With this concept in mind, the following hints for planning for successful learning experiences are given.

1. An adult may expect more rapid achievement than he is capable of. He must be helped to avoid frustration and discouragement by having experiences which bring him success.
2. Keep in mind the different speeds at which individuals can operate and accommodate them.
3. Older learners should set their own pace.
4. To accommodate slower learning rates of seniors, select a central idea and plan instruction around it, so that less essential parts of the lesson can be dropped if necessary.

Certain physiological changes occur as the years pass that affect the learner's functioning. Changes in his vision suggest that illumination should

be brighter and the point of focus in the classroom should not be altered without appropriate time for adjustment to the change. Visual aids should be large and in clearly contrasting colours. Reading materials should be in large print with double spacing. Do not use visual aids or printed materials that are unclear.

Changes in hearing include increased defective hearing, decreased sound discrimination and retarded auditory reaction time. You can adapt to these changes by providing a quiet classroom.

Be sure that students can see you and their classmates so that those who partly lip read can do so. Speak slowly, distinctly and clearly, but avoid distorting the language by overpronouncing, shouting or changing the natural rhythm and intonation of the language. Repeat questions from the class to be sure everyone has heard them.

Certain psychological differences exist between adults and children. The mature adult has a more clearly delineated sense of self which has developed as a result of his life experiences. He sees himself as independent and self-directed. The instructor can increase learning if he draws on the life experiences of his students and maintains an orientation to the learners' problems. Classroom activities should provide some freedom of choice for the learner and invite student initiative. Resources for learning such as charts and information about structures should be made freely available to the learner to foster independent effort, self-direction and discovery learning.

Attitudes in the adult become more stable and fixed. To bring about changes in attitude the most effective process is to engage him in discussion and role plays. If he regards himself as a poor learner see that he experiences a series of successes in this role by giving him learning tasks that he can readily handle.

The opportunity to contribute to the class and assist other students can build his confidence. If the student has a particular skill or interest, invite him to demonstrate it to the class. In addition to giving him recognition and response from other members of the class such a demonstration can lay the foundation for further language practice.

Additional References

Dickinson, Gary, *Teaching Adults,* Chapters 1, 2, and 5.
Kidd, J.R., *How Adults Learn,* Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 9.
Knowles, Malcolm, *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species,* pp. 40 to 45.

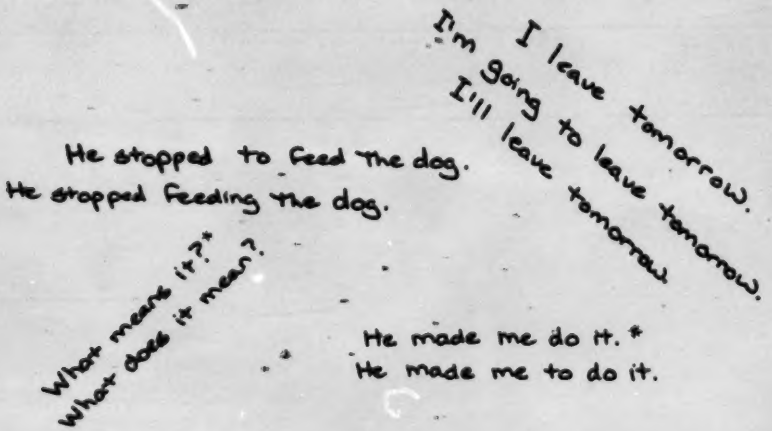
2

Section Two
THE LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

The Language

Language is a complex creation of man. One of the wonders of the child is that he appears to learn to speak the language of his environment with so little effort. He does in fact expend a great deal of energy in learning the sounds and grammar patterns of his mother tongue, with babbling in his crib, then with one or two words which is a kind of "telegraphese" such as "Want cookie" or "Daddy gone bye bye" and then on to complex grammatical structures and the perfection of pronunciation. In old age we are still learning vocabulary. Even though we continue to learn our language throughout our entire lives, we never know it all.

But all this learning of our native tongue is largely taken for granted, because as with learning to walk, everyone does it. It is when we come to considering a second language we begin to discover its complexities, patterns and idiosyncrasies. Language is like the cultural features of a people. There may be no real explanation as to why it is as it is.


I'm going to leave tomorrow.
I leave tomorrow.
I'll leave tomorrow.
He stopped to feed the dog.
He stopped feeding the dog.
What means it?*
What does it mean?
He made me do it.*
He made me to do it.

When we speak our own language we know the meaning,
-but can't necessarily explain patterns.

Language is a bit like a picture you have had hanging on your wall so long that you do not see it. You are aware of it, but you are not able to describe its detail or the artistry it entails. It is not until we try to learn another one that we appreciate the miracle of language. How many people have discovered that when they learned French they "learned grammar" for the first time? The most difficult language to teach is your own, because it is so much a part of your being. We do not at first see it with enough perspective to see the regularities that make teaching it a reasonable thing to do. We speak it, but we do not "know" it.

It is common to hear people say that if you can speak it you can teach it. By studying about the language and how to teach it we can provide a more efficient and effective learning experience for students and can avoid setting up barriers to learning. If, for example, we teach the student how to place his tongue and lips to make a sound that is in English, but not in his own language, he will learn. The untrained teacher is likely to repeat and repeat the sound often with increasing volume and so frustrate or antagonize the student that failure is almost guaranteed.

Avoid distorting the language.

It is true that people pick up language on the street and some are very adept at this. However, many who learn this way are incomprehensible to the native speaker and create numerous barriers for themselves that can limit their potential in a new country.

Language does not stand alone. It is interconnected with culture, man's view of the world, with gesture and physical attitude which are part of his silent language. A language instructor does not just teach words or words in particular orders. She is also involved in discovering how her language and culture compare and contrast with that of her students. Because of the interrelationship between language and culture, she is inevitably and rightly engaged in identifying for students the customs and expectations of the people in the surrounding culture. For example, it is quite customary in Canada for an adult student to be very informal with his instructor and to be on a first name basis. But students from Indonesia want to address the instructor as "Ma'am," while those from the Punjab will call her "Teacher," both of which may violate the democratic inclinations of the Canadian instructor.

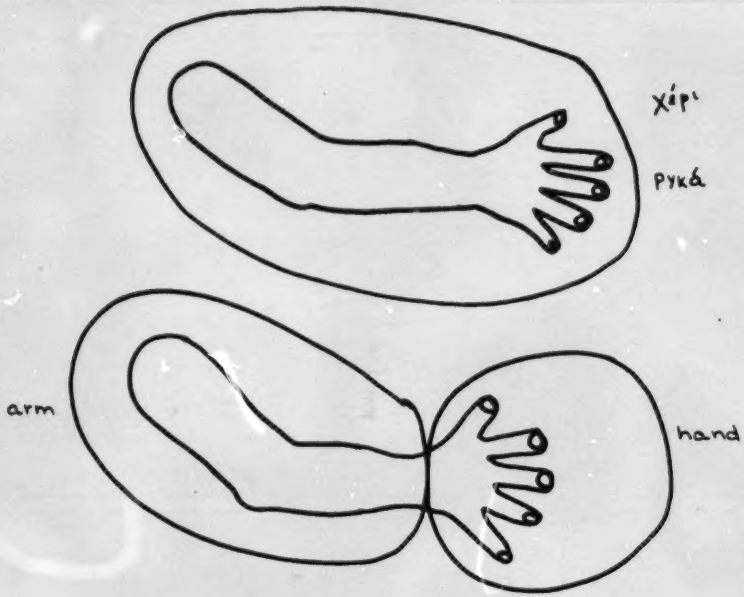
Language consists, then, of many components which include systems of meaning, grammar, sound and social usage. Each of these is highly complex and interacts with the others.

Meaning

Meaning is probably the most important aspect of language and should always be kept in the forefront in language learning. Unless the meaning is clear connections are difficult to make. Learning unrelated words is likely to be as difficult as memorizing a long series of numbers as in a serial number. With adults meanings are generally understood except in the case of those that are culturally unique. For example, for a student from India the "blue line" or "the 49th parallel" or the concept of homes for the aged may not mean anything because he was not brought up in Canada. But certainly experiences, concepts and objects that are universal would be understood by him. He knows what a shoe is. He just has to learn the English word for it.

To enable the student to learn vocabulary most efficiently, it is important to be aware that it is easiest to learn words that represent objects, actions and ideas that are related to one another. Seven to nine new words that relate to the same context are usually enough for one lesson.

One reason we generally do not, (even when it is possible) teach by means of translation, is that languages often express concepts differently. Whereas English has separate words for arm and hand Greek and Russian use one word to refer to that whole extension that comes from your shoulder. When we teach language, we, in some respects, teach a different concept of the world about us.



When we teach language we teach a different concept of the world about us.

We get meaning from words, but we also get it from the grammar or structure of the language. For example, "I *played* tennis" usually suggests that you did it at a specific time in the past which may or may not be stated. "I *have played* tennis" may mean, I've had my turn and the court is now free for you to play, or that at some time in the past I experienced the game, or that I know how to play it. The meaning taken would depend on the context. The verb tenses in this case (the contrast between *played* and *have played*) differentiate the meaning. Similarly, meaning is carried by endings. Adding an 's' or 'es' to nouns indicates that we mean more than one.

In addition to getting meaning from the sounds and structure of English we also get meaning from the situation or context in which the language occurs. A word may mean one thing in one context, but something else in another. A student who learns the word for "chair" along with "table," and then comes across the sentence, "The new member addressed the chair at the annual meeting." is going to have to learn a new meaning in this new context. Because the context affects the meaning, vocabulary lists in which words are presented in isolation have very limited value. They do not offer

the student the opportunity to learn by association as is possible in a context.

Classes in which language is presented in lists and in grammatical forms tend to be more concerned with the language as a whole than with those parts of it the student needs most.

Grammar

Grammar is basically a matter of how we put a language together. English is formed on a basic pattern which produces sentences like "John wants a job" and "John works hard" and "John is blonde." In each case you will notice that the pattern is: subject (John) followed by verb, (wants, works, is). Other languages have other word orders. In Japanese, for example, the verb may come at the end of the sentence instead of after the subject. Compare English and Chinese.

English: Is there a kitchen in this apartment?

Chinese: this apartment have kitchen (question word)

Not only do we have this basic sentence pattern of subject verb for statements, but we can transform it into a question or a negative statement according to rules. When the verb 'to be' is in the statement, the question is made in this way.

John is sick.
becomes: Is John sick?

When there is no verb 'to be' in the sentence 'do' has to be introduced.

John wants a job.
becomes: Does John want a job?

Negatives are also made by manipulating the statement. By adding 'not' or the contraction 'n't' we get:

John isn't sick

As in the question formation we also add 'does':

John doesn't want a job.

Sound System

The sound system of English is closely connected to its grammar and meaning. When we add an 's' or 'es' to a noun our grammar tells us that it means more than one. How we pronounce the 's' that occurs in the verbs such as 'lags' and 'tips' is regulated by the rules of sound or

phonology of English. The added 's' is as in 'zoo' most of the time. But when it follows the sounds of

1. p as in cap
2. k as in tack
3. t as in cat
4. f as in cough

it is made with what you might call a hissing 's' as in Sam. Try saying these words aloud and listen to the 's' sound: caps, tacks, cats, coughs. Contrast the 's' sound in bags, pulls, says, and runs.

Try putting an 'ed' on words that end in the sounds p, k, t, f. You will notice that the 'ed' sounds like a 't', e.g. capped, tacked. In contrast, bagged and pulled are pronounced with a 'd' sound.

The sound system of English also involves the music of the language, which is made up of rhythm, stress and intonation. Rhythm and stress go hand in hand. English has a regular stress system. You can beat out the rhythm of a sentence. Except in cases of special emphasis for meaning, we stress certain parts of speech and not others. Nouns, verbs (except the verb 'to be'), demonstrative pronouns (this, that, these, those) adverbs (e.g. slowly) and adjectives (e.g. big, red) are stressed. So in this sentence we get the stress as indicated:

That bíg réd trúck móved slówly down the stréet.

The only words not stressed are 'down' and 'the'. In this sentence there are fewer stressed words:

They have been séeing a lót of him látely.

Correct stress helps the listener understand the meaning of a sentence. ESL students have to learn to stress correctly to sound English and to be understood.

Intonation refers to the rising and falling of our voices. English follows two basic patterns:

1. Statements and questions beginning with a question word rise and fall.

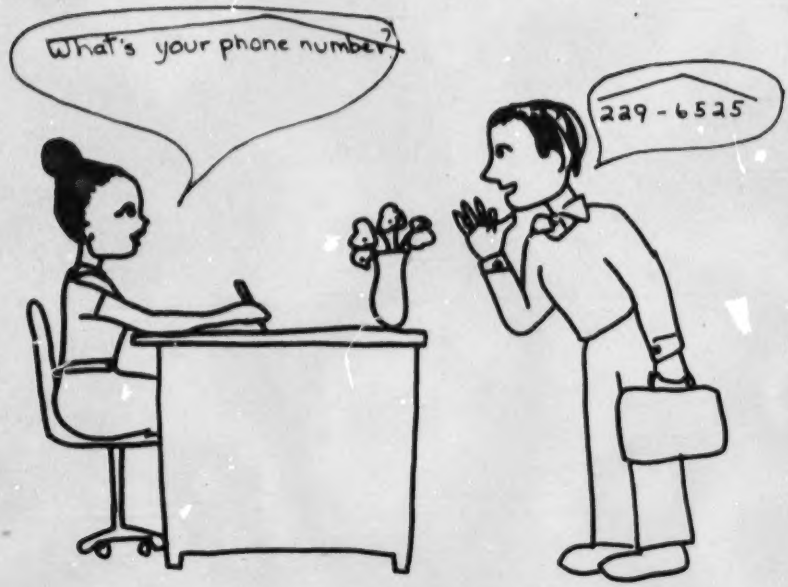
   He's going to the store.

   Where's he going?

2. Questions that are answered by 'yes' or 'no' have a rising intonation.

   Is he going now?

   Mr. Jones? (Are you Mr. Jones?)



'Wh' questions have the same intonation as statements rising and falling.

Yes/No questions have a rising intonation.

Rhythm, stress and intonation all contribute to the meaning of what is being said. If you do not hear precisely what has been said, you may at least have caught the intonation and know you have been asked a question that can be answered by yes or no.

Social Usage

Social usage is another dimension of language. In certain situations we use formal language, e.g. when applying for a job. That language is different from what we would use in speaking to a close friend of the same age. Other kinds of language are used within the family and different styles may be used with different members. You probably speak in a different way to your grandmother than you would to your younger brother or sister.

Social usage involves not only the topics and words you choose in a social situation, but also your manner of expressing them. The more formal and strange the situation is, the more precisely you speak. It also involves the way in which we express meaning. Whereas in English if we think someone is saying something which is incorrect, and we want to put him straight, we may respond by saying,

I think you'll find that such and such is the case.
or, I believe you're mistaken on that, it is such and such.
or, I can't agree with you on that . . . .

In Hebrew, the same concept would be expressed:

You're wrong.

Unless the Israeli in Canada learns our social usage he would probably get a pretty negative reaction.

You probably speak in a different way to your grandmother than you would to your younger brother.

Language Learning

To attempt to acquire another language is to take on one of the most complex learning tasks. Success in learning a new language is very much related to motivation. Children may find it easy to learn new sounds, but adults have been shown to be superior in developing listening comprehension. To learn a language involves the student intellectually, physically and emotionally. The desire to learn is prompted by the wish to belong to the English speaking society and to function effectively in it. Resistance to learning may exist at the same time and often stems from anxiety about losing one's own language and culture. These fears are not necessarily groundless though obviously it is possible for a person to be bicultural and bilingual.

For an adult to learn another language is both similar to and different from a child learning his native language. The similarities lie in the fact that both child and adult have to:

1. hear the language
2. mimic it
3. form hypotheses about the ways in which it works
4. experiment with it
5. get feedback on their efforts
6. correct hypotheses
7. practice

The differences that make it another kind of experience for the adult are his intellectual development, life experience and motivation along with the fact that he has already learned a language. An adult brings these characteristics to the task. The challenge for the instructor is to capitalize on these attributes in classroom activities. Suggestions as to how this may be done will be made in Section three.

The functional approach to language instruction accommodates the fact that language is infinite and therefore cannot be learned completely. Those parts of it are selected which enable the learner to cope with his daily life and achieve his aspirations, be they social, academic or vocational. The student learns the items he needs to cope in a situation that occurs regularly in his life, e.g. needing to ask the information operator for telephone numbers. To begin with, the instructor teaches him the numbers from one to ten and to request a number for a particular name and address. Armed with these skills and the courtesies involved, he can take part in a simulated encounter with an information operator. He can then be given the task of calling the real operator and requesting a new number. Public information lines provide a good opportunity for anonymous, but real life communication.

Stages in Language Learning

The method involved in a functional approach entails several stages (see Fig. 2) The first stage is controlled by the instructor and requires the student to mimic the instructor and the other students and to memorize ten numbers and the pattern for making a polite request. ("Please give me the number for Jacob Jones on 3rd Avenue.") and expressing appreciation appropriate to that situation (semi-formal and matter of fact "thank you" or "thanks". Involving the student in the action of making such a call will engage more of his senses, make it more realistic and help him to learn. The next stage is semi-controlled and requires the student to complete sentences in the patterns taught putting his own or simulated content into them e.g. giving a name he already knows in the request. In the third stage he is expected to cope spontaneously in situations in which he can use what he has learned. He should then be given a community task which involves using these new skills and report on his success to the class. Subsequent lessons might involve him in more numbers in telephone situations e.g. long distance, if that is a need, or in using numbers in some other life situation e.g. giving his address or Social Insurance Number when asked.

The mimicry and memorization aspects should be as brief as possible. Memorization is one of the most difficult learning tasks. Learning related to meaning and by association is much easier. The need for distributed practice, mentioned in section one is important to keep in mind. There is ample opportunity for imparting meaning in teaching numbers as most students are familiar with the Arabic symbols we use. In any case, the meaning of numbers can readily be clarified by the use of objects or drawings. Cuisenaire rods are invaluable for this and have a sophistication that appeals to many adults. The meaning can also be made clear by acting out the exchange.

While the written word is a valuable tool in helping the student to review his lesson at home and of course essential in reading, it is important to encourage students to listen attentively in order to develop their memories for what they hear. If they come to rely on written forms they will slow down their speaking by visualizing the written word, rather than associating the word they hear directly with the meaning of it. Until they acquire the natural rhythm of English their reading will distort the language.

Principles in Error Correction

Figure 3 suggests guidelines for error correction.

In the second and third stages, which are semi-controlled and spontaneous, the student is practising the application of what he has learned. He will no doubt make errors in pronunciation, stress and intonation, in grammar, and possibly in social usage. The question of how

Figure 2

STAGES IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Instructor's role		*Kinds of activity*
carefully planned, brief and peppy, designed to establish sentence patterns	CONTROLLED	mimicry, memorization substitution drills extension drills question and answer (cue) question formation for given statements sentence combining
allow more time for thought, if student has difficulty remind him of pattern learned in controlled stage	SEMI CONTROLLED	dialogue completion question & answer (no cues) sentence completion paraphrase using particular structure
instructor organizes situations, games and gives students considerable freedom	SPONTANEOUS	role plays on "problem situations" problem solving tasks e.g. making introductions games freely paraphrase
instructor receives student reports, may ask questions, uses student input to plan future lessons	TRANSFER TO REAL LIFE COMMUNICATION	*carry out a transaction in a store communicate in some purposeful way with neighbour, friend, stranger community task, e.g. obtain information, make appointment
	* *these activities are then reported in class*	

to respond to these errors is a crucial one. The answer involves a number of variables.

1. the individual student:
   Is he seeking perfection or just the ability to communicate?
   Is he fatigued?
   Has he had enough correction for one day?
   How is his morale today?
2. Is the error basic to the structure of English?
   Does it impair the listener's comprehension?
   Will a native speaker react to the error?
3. Is the error related to the main teaching point of the lesson?

The degree of perfection has to be seen in relation to the need to build the learner's confidence and fluency. If concern about making errors is

magnified by constant correction, fluency will be difficult to achieve. Some errors result from the stage of learning the student is in e.g. he knows the rule but not the exceptions or certain limits to the rule. For example, we can say "my apartment has two bedrooms," but not "my living room has four pictures." Other mistakes are caused by the student falling back on the patterns of his native language rather than applying these new ones of English. The natural tendency in all learning is to try to simplify the process. So the language learner will be inclined, in the early stages, to leave out words that may not seem crucial to communication. As a result, articles (a, an, the) the verb 'to be', verb endings (ing, ed, s) and plurals (s, es) will be freely omitted as they are by the child learning his first language.

Many errors will be corrected by the student himself or by his peers as he gets practice in a pleasant supportive environment that affords plenty of opportunity to try it out.

What we are saying is that the teacher has to be sensitive to the student and aware of what is really important in the language. Our own standards of perfection should not necessarily be the basis for our choice. When we choose to correct student errors it should be a conscious decision to do so based on well thought out principles. We need to be sure that a correction will be effective and not just be an irritant to the student.

Additional References

Falk, *Linguistics and Language*, Chapter 21 on Native Language Acquisition.

Nilsen and Nilsen, *Pronunciation Contrasts* is useful as a reference to check how particular sounds are made.

Paulston and Bruder, *Techniques in Second Language Learning*, social usage and the steps from controlled to spontaneous speech, parts 1 and 2.

Burt and Kiparsky, *The Gooficon*, gives rules that you can pass on to students to help them overcome errors.

Figure 3

CORRECTION OF ERRORS IN STRUCTURE (Grammar)

CONTROLLED	If the error is in the structure or grammar point of the lesson, correct
SEMI CONTROLLED	As above, also correct if the error is a basic sentence pattern e.g. a negative statement such as the incorrect "I no like it" should be corrected or at least indication that there is an error given. Sometimes you may want to set the error aside for individual work or for a class lesson at another time
SPONTANEOUS	Note glaring errors in basic sentence patterns and deal with them later, don't interrupt the flow of speech. This stage cannot be error free. The student is experimenting with the language.
TRANSFER TO COMMUNITY USE	The student is on his own or with his classmates. Instructor assists by helping student analyze when the communication is reported to the class.

When possible give the students the rule that gives him guidance in the correct use of the structure. The Gooficon by Burt and Kiparsky is very helpful in providing simply stated rules.

3

Section Three
THE INSTRUCTOR AND INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES

The Instructor

The feelings an instructor has about people in general and the attitudes she has toward students and toward herself can greatly affect the learning process. The behaviour of the instructor is of course, very much related to the complexity of those feelings and attitudes. It is important that the instructor believe in the student's desire to learn and understand why the student sometimes resists learning. An instructor who is sensitive to students and values them will be more effective. The one who is so caught up in her own feelings or in techniques and procedures is apt to lose sight of the student and fail to make the class student centred. The instructor's best tool in developing her skill is preparation. This includes:

1. setting objectives for student performance, e.g. student shows comprehension by following directions or demonstrates his ability to converse in relation to a particular situation.
2. planning activities for student participation that reflect those objectives.
3. assisting in the natural learning process (see Gagne, *Essentials of Learning for Instruction* for background on the learning process).
   a) Tell him the goal of the lesson. The goal should relate to a specific need the student has for language e.g. enquiring about his phone bill, following instructions of his science instructor.
   b) Create an interest or curiosity through a visual aid or description of a problem.
   c) Recall known material that will be used in the lesson
   d) Give the student limited new information needed, e.g. a new structure or 7 to 10 new vocabulary items. Where possible ask the students to pool their knowledge of vocabulary needed by showing actual items or pictures of them.
   e) Plan for plenty of practice in different kinds of activities in a variety of groupings (individuals, pairs, threes, total group). Give guidance to practice through cues, (the first word of a sentence, picture cues, mime cue) and through provision for self correction, peer correction and if necessary through instructor

correction. Note the order. Guidance may also be given by means of giving an example.

f) Prepare for transfer of learning by providing other contexts into which newly acquired learning can be used.

g) Give student feedback on his achievement of the goal.

h) Plan a community experience in which student uses his learning in a real situation.

i) Student records on tape, in writing, or simply through recall the use of newly acquired language in the community.

4. rehearsing presentation of the lesson, directions and explanations, giving special attention to ways in which instructor talk will be limited, and student talk provided for.
5. focussing on individual students, their learning and psychological needs. Keeping a card file of student problems and progress provides a focus for this individual attention.

In addition to being sensitive and providing authentic responses to students, certain other attitudes of the instructor will inevitably be communicated to them. The instructor who is an enthusiastic learner brings a positive attitude to the learning situation that can be infectious. The instructor needs to work at developing good communication skills. Speech must be simple and clear. Cluttering your speech with extraneous thoughts and talking to yourself only serve to confuse the student.

Use all the aids such as gesture, mime and audio visual aids to get meaning across. The instructor's ability to communicate will be enhanced by having a sense of humour and being a person who is open to a wide variety of life experience. Of course the best communication skills are useless without knowledge of the language and of how to teach it. Good will is nothing if only accompanied by ignorance.

An instructor who is well prepared, but who can adapt procedures to developments in the class without losing a sense of direction will be more effective than one who sticks by THE PLAN come hell or high water. If you can take input of students and integrate it into the lesson you will find it will contribute to your effectiveness. This kind of response to students involves them in the learning process and reinforces the exercise of initiative on their part.

Your relationship with students can foster motivation, confidence and willingness to experiment in him.

Getting feedback is important in adjusting your teaching to your students' needs and abilities. ESL students are less likely to be critical than native born students for various reasons:

1. they may be newcomers
2. they may be insecure
3. it may not be in their educational tradition to criticize the instructor.

ESL students are less likely to be critical than native born students.

4. they may not want to cause another person to "lose face"
5. they may feel that the problem lies in their own inadequacies as learners
6. they may not have the needed language or know how to express their views tactfully in a different cultural context

Creating openings for feedback on a lesson can be of great importance in your seeing where your students are, and in giving them an opportunity to affect the educational process. You might give them sentence completions to do such as the following:

1. I liked this lesson because . . . .
2. I found . . . . easy/difficult because . . . .
3. I'd like more/less . . . . in our classes.

If you have very basic beginners you may have to have some bilingual help to get feedback until they have learned sufficient English to express likes, dislikes and preferences.

It is the teacher's responsibility to see that the environment in the classroom is conducive to learning. She should use seating arrangements that suit particular activities. These should change often enough to create variety but not so often as to disorient the student. Sometimes the class will work together as a whole group (most likely when a main teaching point is first presented.) At others, small groups will give the greatest opportunity for practice, and will accommodate different levels of competence and different rates of learning. From time to time there may be individual work done using the resources you have made available in the classroom. Whenever there is an opportunity to provide for choice, do so. The freedom implicit in individual activities and choice encourage initiative and independence from you. You should be "working yourself out of a job" with each student.

Techniques

The progression from controlled to spontaneous use of language referred to in section two can be put into action with the kinds of activities outlined in Figure 2 on page 25.

Dialogue

The first stage, which is controlled, would be very short and serves to set the sentence pattern in the student's mind. Students should not be asked to memorize dialogues, unless some sort of picture of other cues which serve as reminders are provided to assist them with the sequence (see fig. 4). Even then there should not be extensive reliance on memorization. It is the most difficult of the learning processes. They do need to memorize the pattern so that they can practise using it and discover the limits of the rule that apply to it, e.g. the use of the verb 'to make' has limits. In practising it they will discover that the teacher accepts:

I made some bread.
I made a mistake.

but will not accept

I made my homework.

Practising New Structures

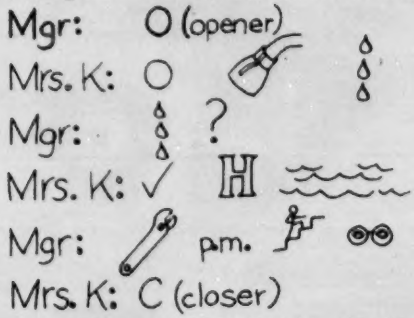
Drills provide the student with intensive practise with a new item or one that is causing difficulty. The danger is that they drag, become boring and that the teacher may overuse them.

An example of a substitution drill is as follows:

Teacher: *George went downtown yesterday (to school)*
Student: *George went to school yesterday.*
Teacher: *(Paul, too)*
Student: *Paul went to school yesterday too.*

Figure 4 DIALOGUE CUES

You can cue dialogues for beginners with symbols e.g. this set of cues is for the revised dialogue for lesson 33 in the Modulearn material on page 3.



O stands for opener, C for closer, notions the students readily become accustomed to.

For less controlled dialogue for students who have some English, get them to supply the sentences. The instructor may say, "Mrs. Kim has a problem. Her shower leaks. She wants the manager to fix it." As the students supply the dialogue the instructor may note cues in comic strip bubbles, so the students can practise in pairs without losing track of the sequence.

The complexity of the drill of course depends on the familiarity of the student with the material. It is important that such drills be meaningful and do not violate truth. For example in the drill just cited, you would use real student names, and make what happened true or if giving flight to the imagination, admit it, but make the story plausible.

Cumulative drills in which items are added can, if done in short bursts, be fun and serve to review word order and develop fluency. Use a picture of two people shopping for bathing suits.

Instructor: *John went downtown (Mary)*
Student: *John and Mary went downtown (to buy bathing suits)*
Student: *John and Mary went downtown to buy bathing suits*

Other additions could be: for their holiday, at the beach, yesterday. The final sentence would be:

Yesterday John and Mary went downtown to buy bathing suits for their holiday at the beach.

Such a drill builds up their ability to remember and express longer and longer sentences. Other types of drills can be found in references cited at the end of this section.

Asking questions that can be answered by yes or no and responding to cues can all provide controlled practice.

Controlled practice can be based on study and practice of a given dialogue. Hearing natural language in use provides a model for the student. It is much better for such a dialogue to be heard or acted out than it is for them to be given a copy to read before they have heard it and practised it. Seeing two teachers act out a dialogue will be much more memorable than just reading it. Also you may have students who cannot read English. The following is an example of a dialogue for study and controlled practice related to it:

Example of Greeting

Informal

a) Hi, Joe.
b) Hi, Sam. How's it going?
a) Okay. How about you?

Semi-Controlled Practice

Susie: Hi, George. How's it going?
George:
Susie: Okay. Have you got a place to live yet?
George:

Semi-Controlled

a) Hi, Jacques. What's new?
b)
a)
b)

In uncontrolled practice based on the above, the following information could be given to students in preparation for spontaneous use of language with social usage appropriate to the situation.

Uncontrolled

1. Greet your friend Vic and ask him about the movie he went to last night.
2. Greet Mona. She has been absent for several days.

Students should prepare such role plays orally and should only be given a minute or two to plan.

Visual materials that help to give meaning and to give practice are available from educational suppliers or can be produced by teachers and students. Mary Finocchario makes some very practical suggestions in

Chapter 4, Materials and Methods in her book *English as a Second Language.*

Error Correction

When you move into activities that are less controlled the students will inevitably make mistakes. If you recall the earlier discussion on factors to take into account when deciding whether to correct, you will be conscious of the fact that not all errors should be corrected. Having decided that an error should be corrected the instructor should give the student an opportunity to correct it himself. This can be done by various techniques. You would first, in a non-judgemental way, identify where the error occurred. This can be done by repeating the erroneous word or by showing in a visual way where the error was. It is important that the student's intent is clear to the instructor and that in making "corrections" the meaning of the corrected version is not different from the original concept in the student's mind. A visual technique is to draw slots for the words in the sentence with an arrow to the incorrect word. For example, for the sentence:

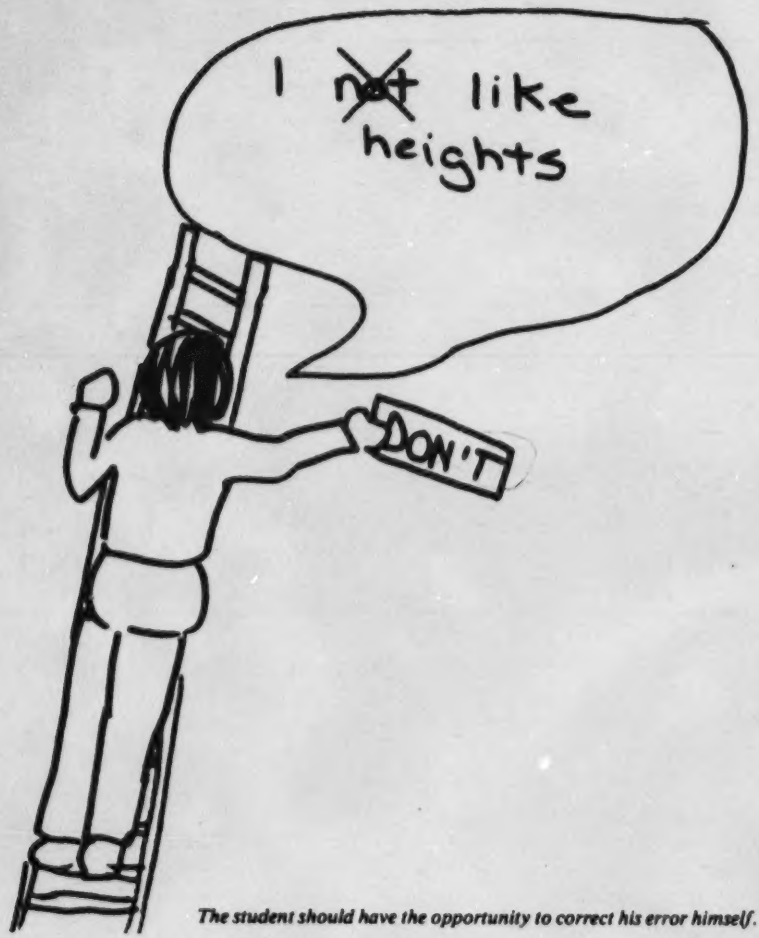
John goed downtown last night.

the teacher could put the following on the board:

If the student can make the necessary adjustments himself, he is more likely to learn the correct form or, if he really knew it, and his error was just a lapse, remember to use the correct form the next time. Such lapses are not uncommon among native speakers, who simply back up and correct themselves.

A similar technique can be used to draw attention to missing or to extra words. If the student cannot make the correction, others in the class may help. This is desirable provided that, the student himself is given a chance to try for the correct form and that a norm of mutual aid rather than competition has been fostered in the class. By accepting errors as an expected phenomenon and handling them in a matter-of-fact way the instructor can prevent anxiety about them. Fear of making mistakes will operate against the achievement of fluency and learning in general. The making of errors should be seen as a natural and necessary part of the language learning process. Error free language in the classroom would indicate that the student was not being given an opportunity to apply what he knows and to practise it for real use in the community.

When the students are engaged in the spontaneous stage, it is inadvisable to interrupt to make corrections. You can keep notes, share serious



The student should have the opportunity to correct his error himself.

problems afterwards and plan to give practice with problems that are general in the class at another time.

There is a diversity of practice among teachers in the matter of the students using their native languages in the ESL classroom. Some teachers adamantly condemn anything but English and others are more permissive. It is a mistake to be rigid on the matter for the following reasons.

1. Adults do not like to be treated like children and be told what they can and cannot do.

2. Sometimes the quickest way to explain a difficult point is to have a student who understands it explain it in his native language.
3. Language, as we in Canada know all too well, is a touchy issue. People are very attached to their mother tongues and all they represent in their lives. By refusing to allow a word of Italian or Chinese, you may, in the students' eyes, be rejecting something they value significantly. If, however, the learning process is being slowed down by the use of first languages, or their use is causing tension between language groups in the class you should ask yourself some questions. Is the pace too slow? Is the subject matter or language too difficult? Is there great diversity in learning rates or levels? You may have to arrange the grouping and pacing in the class differently. In order to show that they value their students' languages, some instructors learn to say something, perhaps a greeting, in the language of each student in the class. Putting the shoe on the other foot can have quite a positive effect. Some have had good results by from time to time getting a student to teach the class to say something in her native language. The result usually is that the student gets a lot of practice in English when explaining the meaning and describing how Chinese or Punjabi is different from English.

Bilingual Approach

The matter of bilingual teaching cannot be dealt with extensively here. A few points are, however, important to make. It should be used very selectively. Some students find the leap directly into English too difficult to make. Learning with someone who shares their language and culture sometimes makes it easier for them to get started. The danger is that little English is spoken and the connection between meaning and English is made through the first language. The achievement of fluency can be greatly retarded. Bilingual language teaching should ideally be handled in the following way.

1. Explanations of the differences between languages should be given as items come up in the lessons. For example, it might be explained when plurals are being introduced to Chinese students that English shows the concept of more than one by adding an 's' or 'es' as well as by using a number or other determiners with nouns that can be counted.

   e.g. one apple - two apples, some apples, a lot of apples

   Cantonese depends on the determiner alone and does not have an ending for plurals as we do. With this explanation these students

can concentrate on listening for plurals and making them part of their English.

2. Although many words are not directly translatable it is sometimes quickest when other means are not efficient, e.g. with abstract nouns like trouble or happiness, to translate the word.
3. The native language is useful of course in providing beginners with crucial community information such as emergency numbers, the function of the rentalsman, and where to get birth control information.

On the whole it is important to use the native language as little as possible and move toward not using it at all. As soon as the students have built some confidence in their ability to learn English, other languages should be dropped.

Lesson Plans

You will find that the lesson plans provided in *ESL A New Approach to the 21st Century* arrange activities that proceed from controlled to uncontrolled ones. The controlled ones show the student a useful pattern and how to manipulate it. The less controlled ones allow him to make original sentences with it and to use it in appropriate social contexts. For example, if the student is learning how to give information that is commonly requested he will have to be able to comprehend what is being requested and to respond appropriately. Both the correct information and suitable level of formality or informality make it appropriate. We often do not speak in complete sentences, so of course we would not expect him to do so either.

Lesson plans will, as well, contain plans for the student to learn several or all of the language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) over a period of time. The balance of these skills would depend on the goals of the particular course and the needs of the students. Provision will also be made for the integration of these skills. In other words, a listening comprehension exercise might later become the basis for oral practice. If students are going to develop reading skills, the same, related or adapted material might serve for reading and writing exercises.

The following are some techniques for the development of each of these skills.

Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension activities should be related to things students will hear and have to understand in their daily lives. These include such things as following oral directions, listening to the TV and radio, listening

Learning to follow directions is a good way to practise listening comprehension.

to two or more people in dialogue, understanding on the telephone, hearing and remembering information given by peers, in commercial contacts and by professional people such as doctors and teachers.

One way of giving practice in following directions is to give the students a simple map. (Use streets in their neighbourhood.) Give them directions and have them draw the route on the map. They will first have to understand north, south, east, west, right and left. They can check the correctness of their comprehension when you draw the route described on the blackboard or show them a large map with your route drawn on it.

Understanding on the telephone can be developed by using battery operated adult sized telephones in class. These are often available from the telephone company. A tape recorded phone message would also have something of the same effect. Have half the students prepare a message with two items of information. Record it or take turns giving it to another student on the telephones. The listener will then be asked to identify the information she was given. The more you can involve the students in providing the material or content (as in recording their own message for another student) the more self directed and independent they will become.

You will find that their sense of fun will come to the fore and there will be an enjoyable range of topics and humorous exchange when they contribute content.

Oral Practice

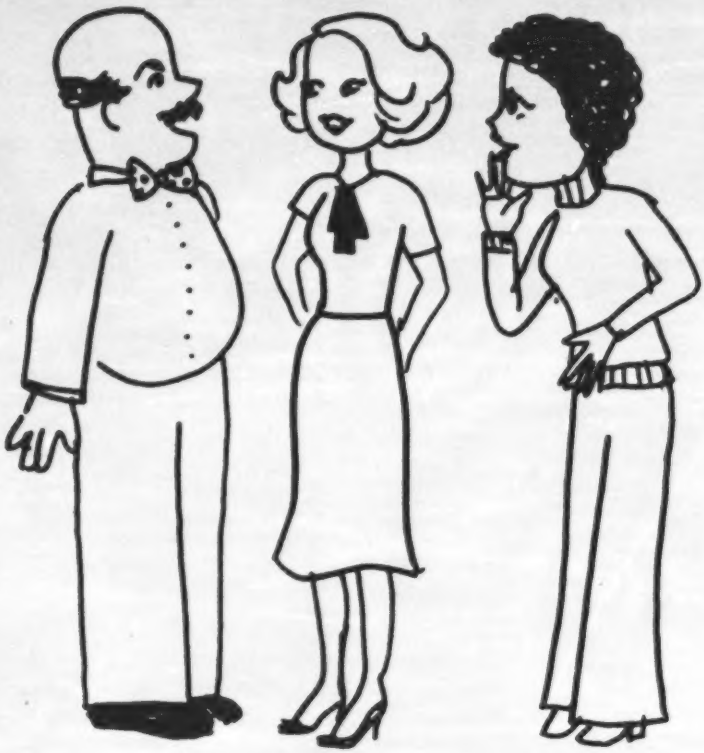
As you can see from the foregoing the skills are not sharply separated in the class. You should however, be clear in your own mind what the particular objective is in each portion of the class so that the students do get specific practice in each area. For example you would not want to get into a lot of oral correction or drilling in the listening comprehension segment. Note serious errors and plan to deal with them later or plan a lesson segment around those problems for another day.

Oral practice should be lively and have a varied pace. Going back to teaching numbers, you might teach them first by using Cuisenaire rods. Simple arithmetic which involves only the numbers from 0 to 9 could be used to make number responses automatic. For example give each student a number, then start out by giving a simple addition such as 3 + 2 or the subtraction 9 - 4. The student with the number 5 would call his number. Once you have shown the pattern of activity let a student give the addition of subtraction. If they find this too easy move on to multiplication and division. There are many "numbers" games you can devise to help the student become competent with numbers. These will engage the students' interest and meet their need to cope with numbers far more effectively than memorizing the numbers in their customary series.

Once they have mastered these numbers you can use them in a social context. For example if a student is interested in getting a job or into the trade he practised in his native country, you might get him to role play short segments of a job interview that involve years of experience, age, address and telephone number. You can do a demonstration with a student then pair the students and get them to make their own role plays. In a multi-level class use the more advanced students to pose the questions and the less advanced to reply. The task should be clearly stated with definite expectations.

1. prepare your role play orally in two minutes
2. perform your role play for another pair
   or, for the class as a whole
   or, tape it and listen to the tape with the teacher or the whole class.

It is important that students demonstrate the results of their efforts and have a chance to ask questions about problems they may have encountered in the process. You can then give them a community task such as ordering a sale item on the telephone. In so doing they will have to give the number of the item in the advertisement, their name, address and telephone number to a clerk in a store. They should be asked to report on the experience.



Students can report on community language tasks.

Teaching the Sounds and Music of the Language

As noted in the section two on language, it is important that students be made aware of the rhythm of English. Without it they will be difficult to understand. You can clap out the rhythm of a sentence and get them to do so too. Then repeat the sentence to the beat. For example,

Where are you going?

has two beats,

Where are you going?

We so not stress the 'are' or the 'you' or the 'ing' in going:
And the intonation rises and falls,

Where are you going?

You will notice how much more Canadian your students will sound when they get the rhythm and intonation right. You will have to experiment with other sentences to determine the number of beats. The key is to speak naturally and listen to yourself.

Correct pronunciation is important to communication too. If a student substitutes 'd' for 'th', check with Nilsen and Nilsen, *Pronunciation Contrasts* to see where to place the tongue, lips and teeth. Close your eyes and get the feel of what you actually do when you produce that sound. Get him to close his eyes to concentrate on the feel of the position. Get him to contrast the sound he substitutes with the sound that is new for him. Again Nilsen and Nilsen have lists of such contrasts. Use only a few of them, but select pairs that use the contrast at the beginning, middle and end of words. This practice in contrasts should be brief. If the student cannot make the sound after being shown where to place his tongue and lips accept the fact and come back to it another day. If he can make the contrast, move on to putting the new sound in a familiar context e.g. for the 'th' sound that uses voice, as in the word 'the' or 'mother' get the students to say something about their mothers, such as, "My mother is 69." or "My mother has black hair," or have the students bring a family picture and point out who the people are, e.g. This is my brother, father etc. Pronunciation practice as such, should be short and unpressured. Some students easily feel humiliated when they cannot produce a sound that does not occur in their native language. It is a mistake to get students who can already make a particular sound, to practise it in sound drills. Give students who can do it the opportunity to serve as models for those who cannot and then give them some other activity such as listening to a tape for comprehension while you work with those who have trouble with the sound.

Vocabulary

Things and actions and characteristics that go together should be taught at the same time. For example, chair would be taught with table, as would 'sit on' and 'sit at'. If you use the objects and mime the action by moving the furniture around, you can show the difference between sitting on and sitting at. Teach vocabulary in relation to pictures that have a theme, e.g. a picture of a family on moving day will provide plenty of related words for objects and actions. You might have the students give one another directions as to which room on a floor plan the furniture should be put in. You need to limit the number of new words to between seven and ten

In English you have to stick your tongue out to make the 'th' in mother.

depending on the group. You need to give a variety of kinds of practice with them. Pairs can work together in mastering the pronunciation and spelling of these words. Review them quickly in the following lesson using different kinds of activities for recall.

Patterns

Patterns, identified in section two, can be presented to students by using visual aids. If a student has learned the example given previously, 'John is sick,' show him how the sentence can be changed into a yes/no question by moving the 'is' to the front of the sentence and changing the intonation from

John is sick.

to Is John sick?

Refer back to section two for other ways of forming questions and negatives. In controlled practice you can make a statement about a picture and have students change it to a question. When they get the idea show another picture and have them ask yes/no questions about detail in it. You can make the activity real by having one student hold a new picture with known vocabulary so that only he can see it. Then have the other students visualize the content by asking questions about what is in his picture. This is a variation on the old familiar game of Twenty Questions.

Visual Aids

Visual aids have already been referred to in a number of ways. They are an invaluable resource provided they have content that interests students and are large enough to be easily seen from a distance. Large photographs of real adult interactions are ideal. A variation on a role play is to have the students make up dialogues that might occur between people shown in activities in pictures. Such an activity would give free oral practice and give the students an opportunity to draw on newly learned vocabulary.

Reading

If reading skills are included in the objectives of the course you will have to decide to what extent it will be taught. Reading is often seen as a support to oral activity. It allows the student to review oral work at home and gives him andhis family some tangible evidence of his progress. In a literate society it is important to survival to be able to read.

At the most elementary level a student should be able to read numbers, street signs, bills, pay slips, the phone book, schedules, cheques and advertisements. If you relate reading exercises to the oral ones, the student will have a simpler task than if you introduce new content. *You* may enjoy more variety, but the student builds his confidence by reviewing known material in another language skill (e.g. reading) or in a different context.

Continuing with the theme of numbers, you could use a supermarket food flyer which has large colourful pictures, names of pictured items and their prices. You could set up a game in which you ask the price of different items on the flyer, then reverse it and ask, "What vegetable costs 29 cents a pound?" As soon as the pattern is established get one of the more able students to ask the questions. Avoid setting up games in which students are "knocked out" if they cannot answer or make a mistake. They need the practice more than the ones who can do it correctly. It is important to allow sufficient time for the student to respond. A slow response may indicate that the student needs a longer time to think. If there is a wide range of speed in production in the class, break into smaller groups and put those who work at the same rate together.

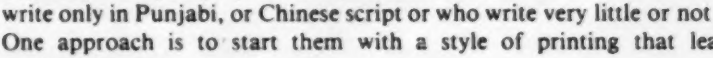
In more advanced reading practice, select materials that are on familiar topics and are of the sort the student will ultimately want to read. Vary the materials between fiction and non fiction. The students will need help to get meaning from reading and to cope with the sounds and spellings in English. Flash cards can be used to give practice. They can be used initially with the class as a whole and then can be passed out to pairs for individual practice.

Spelling

The same flash cards can be used to learn spelling. Teach the students to look at a clearly printed word, look away and visualize the word. If it is a troublesome word get him to recite the spelling aloud, draw it on his hand, write it down several times. Use as many of the senses as possible in working toward mastery. Do not expect students to be able to use a word productively or spell it if he has only read it. He may be able to recognize and understand it in a particular context, but will have to do more work with it to be productive with it.

Writing

Writing involves both forming the letters as in script and composing sentences and paragraphs. Many students come to ESL classes who can write only in Punjabi, or Chinese script or who write very little or not at all. One approach is to start them with a style of printing that leads to handwriting e.g.



Later they can join the letters to make it into handwriting. They should be given work sheets that present letter formations in a logical way, e.g. all the down stroke letters such as l, t, f, j, i can be practised together. It simplifies the task. Student work sheets should be kept in a file or his notebook so he can see his progress. It is better to create your own worksheets than to use materials designed for children.

Writing in terms of composition should relate to the writing tasks the students are faced with. For example people who work in trades may have to write estimates and simple business letters. Housewives may have to write notes to the teacher or consumer sorts of letters e.g. to claim on a guarantee or make a complaint. You can begin by having a discussion of what the students would want to say in a particular situation, e.g. Your child has just had the 'flu and you do not want him to take the gym class today. By writing the letter as a class you are using student ideas and at the same time are providing a model for their own efforts. When they have created a class letter give them a slightly different problem and have them write the letter. If you think that task would be too challenging write the information based on a real community task on the board e.g.

You are going to Italy to visit your sick mother. She is old.
You are going to take your child Antonio with you.
You will be away for two weeks.
You leave April 6th.

Then set up the form and have the students fill in the blanks.

Dear Miss Burns,

Antonio will be away from _____ for _____.
I am taking _____ to _____ . We are going to _____ my mother. She is very _____ and _____ . Please excuse Antonio and send home some school work for _____ to do. Thank you.

Sincerely,

In subsequent exercises you can use the same format, but delete more words and give different information.

Additional References

Kenneth Croft, ed. *Readings on English as a Second Language,* on kinds of drills, pp. 138 to 140.

Judith Kettering, *Developing Communicative Competence:* Interaction Activities in English as a Second Language.

Mary Finocchario, *English as a Second Language,* Chapter 4 on materials and methods.

QUESTIONS FOR SUMMARY AND REVIEW

Section One

ADULT LEARNING AND THE ADULT LEARNER

1. What are two characteristics of the adult learner that distinguish him from the learner who is a child?
2. How will you conduct the learning experience to account for these characteristics?
3. How can the life experience of an adult learner be turned to advantage in an ESL class?

Section Two

THE LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

1. In what way is the emphasis on a functional approach different from a grammatical one?
2. What are the advantages of each of these approaches to language learning?
3. What aspects of language e.g. grammar, does an instructor have to become familiar with?
4. What are the stages of language learning in a lesson?
5. Suggest two kinds of activities for each of the stages.

Section Three

THE INSTRUCTOR AND INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES

1. How can you identify what specific life situations a student needs language for?
2. How can you adapt your lessons to accomodate to those needs?
3. What are the main stages in preparation of a lesson by the instructor?
4. What are your principles for the correction of student errors?
5. What techniques do you use to correct student errors?
6. What kinds of adaptations may you have to make to teaching materials?

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